

"Mixed-Income Housing: Unanswered Questions"

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The goal of this article is to look at the efficacy of mixed-income housing in the United States by examining its various types. The key questions that the article poses in its discussion of mixed-income housing are its social effects, the costs of providing it, and the essential preconditions that make it financially possible. The article reviews past literature to determine which of these critical questions have been answered and concludes by framing an agenda for future research. This is a scholarly article published in *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* and is focused towards researchers and attempts to outline a research agenda designed to answer questions related to mixed-income housing. "Mixed-Income Housing: Unanswered Questions" was written by Alex Schwartz and Kian Tajbakhsh. The article distinguishes between dispersal strategies, moving the poor into more affluent neighborhoods, and mixed-income housing, which attempts to attract higher income households to developments that are also occupied by the poor. The article identifies four broad categories that mixed-income housing initiatives originate from: (1) State and local governments that foster mixed-income housing through density bonuses, exclusionary zoning ordinances and other land-use regulations that encourage developers to reserve a portion of the total amount of new housing for low and moderate-income households (2) public housing authorities which fund proposals to transform public housing into mixed-income housing. (3) State and local housing programs that require mixed-income occupancy as a condition for funding proposed developments. (4) independent efforts of individuals and agencies to promote mixed-income housing.

The authors identify several key questions that should be addressed when attempting to further understand mixed-income housing. The first series of questions are related to the possible social benefits of mixed-income housing. Specifically, are the life chances of low-income residents improved, if so, how? Will combining people of mixed incomes influence the behavior of poor families? Will the introduction of normative societal standards re-direct the values and expectations of low-income families? Will it effect the social behavior of the poor and instill the necessary social behavior required to maintain formal employment? There is little research on the extent to which physical proximity between the poor and nonpoor leads to desired social outcomes. According to the article there is little research on the effect of mixed-income housing on the delivery of public services. If more affluent households are introduced into a community do public works and services, such as sanitation, police protection, and schooling improve? Furthermore, what is the required minimum income of the more affluent residents in order to achieve the above outlined social benefits?

The second series of questions are related to the costs of developing and maintaining mixed-income housing. Supporters of mixed-income housing assume that low-income housing is more costly than mixed-income housing because it requires a larger public subsidy. Also, inclusion of more higher-income households lowers the cost of subsidized housing by increasing the amount of rental income collected from tenants

which reduces the share that the government is responsible for paying. The authors suggest that researchers should explore questions such as, what are the vacancy losses and turnover costs for market rate units in a mixed-income housing development given that higher income households have more housing choices, mobility, and resources to move? Will sponsors of mixed-income housing need to invest more resources into the construction and maintenance of the dwellings in order to attract and maintain higher-income households? The last series of questions pertains to the essential preconditions that are critical to attracting higher income households. The article identifies issues such as location, size, design, and the condition of the development, the racial and ethnic composition of the development, and the state of the regional housing market as being key to the feasibility of a mixed-income housing development. The size and design of developments is of particular importance. Are high-rise buildings occupied by many poor families less appealing to higher income families than low-density developments? The stigma of race is highly significant when considering the potential success of a mixed-income development. What effect does racial stigmatization have on attracting higher income households to mixed-income housing? How do these factors individually and in combination help create a viable mixed-income housing development? The authors suggest that researchers should use various methodological approaches to answering these questions and to forming future research questions. The approaches include ethnographies, a comparative analysis of existing mixed-income housing developments that control for certain factors like location and demographic characteristics, and conducting a comparative analysis between mixed-income housing and dispersal strategies.